

E

286

.C 48

1821G



An Oration
by
Geddes, Jr., Jno.



Class E 286

Book E 48

1821 Gr

AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED

IN

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1821.

BEFORE THE ST. ANDREW'S COMPANY,

AND AT THEIR REQUEST.

BY JOHN GEDDES, JUN.

"The unity of Government which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence; the support of your tranquillity at home; your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize."

Washington's Valedictory Address.

Charleston:

T. B. STEPHENS, PRINT.

.....

1821.

E286

C48

1821 G

224109

16

ORATION.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS.

At a period of perfect tranquillity at home, and a peace almost universal among the nations of the earth, we assemble to keep the birth day of our Country's emancipation from tyranny. An American on this occasion feels a pride to which the rest of mankind are comparatively strangers. He is animated by the remembrance of the proud defiance shown by his Ancestors to a King and Ministry and Parliament, who dared venture to treat them as slaves. He feels a glory in recollecting the more than Roman valor and Spartan fortitude, with which, the Revolutionary Patriots fought through countless dangers and surmounted difficulties seemingly endless. He is almost amazed, at the adventure so bold and hazardous, of a people at once, changing their old habits and prejudices, and passing from a foreign yoke and kingly domination, to a state of self controul and free-government. If he is dazzled at the brilliance of the attempt, and delighted with the originality of its conception, he is more rejoiced at the extraordinary success which crowned the endeavours of its projectors. The blessings flowing from that abundant source, he is experiencing in all their excellence. No human being like himself claims him as property. No homage is due from him to the chief of a nation, who inherits its inhabitants, as they do their lands and flocks and herds.—Tribute is not exacted from his industry to supply

coffers, whose overflowings are not to enrich the poor, not to help the weak, not to diffuse benefits among those who pay it, but to support indolent magnificence, ruthless ambition, and unfeeling despotism. The rights which God and nature have bestowed on him, are not measured out by a parsimonious hand, as a boon and grant from an earthly superior. The sanctity of the laws, the spirit of equality, both the cause and the effect of the Constitution of his Country, infuse into his heart and his mind, the proper estimate of man's nature. He is born for himself and his Country. He knows no Governors in it, but those whom he and his Fellow Citizens choose to make so. He is taught no abject veneration for rulers. He looks at the public magistrates of his free Government through no false medium.—He considers them but as men, and no longer deserving the regard of the nation, than they exhibit integrity, talents and patriotism; a capability to discharge their duties, and a just sense of the rights of those, who placed them in station.

Fellow-Citizens, near half a century has passed away since our forefathers waged the war, which established their Independence. The fortunes of the United States were singularly prosperous from the commencement, to the termination of this undertaking, then so novel, if not impracticable in the judgment of mankind. A great experiment had been already made by the very nation, of which this Country was a part, to overthrow monarchy, and institute a Government reconcilable with the equality of human rights. Success had attended their high minded efforts. The Throne had lost its mighty influence. A long line of royal ancestry, a sacredness of personage, a birth right to rule, bestowed by the Constitution of his Kingdom, could not save their Monarch from being brought to the block. When

the charm was broken which made them look at regal majesty as something divine, it was no difficult task to root out the aristocracy of their system. The Lords were abolished as a useless body, and the tremendous hierarchy levelled to the dust. A Commonwealth and a Protector, were substituted for hereditary prerogative and a crowned head. But how long did this departure from ancient institutions last? Only little more than twelve years. The death of Cromwell, was followed by the restoration of the very family, whose right to reign, was now maintained, with a zeal commensurate with the violence by which it had so shortly before been denied. With this example, in their own history before them, the enemies of our revolution, looked to the existence of a republic here or elsewhere, as short lived. The United States might succeed in throwing off the yoke which they complained of as oppressive, but like the mother Country, would soon be weary of a new order of things, be glad to revert to monarchical rule, and submit again, to the dominion of the King, whose allegiance they had renounced. Some too, who wished well to the noble cause in which our Country was engaged, timid in their views, fearful only from historical analogy, might despair of a permanent continuance of a new Government built up on the foundations of the old one.

Without contrasting the difference of the age with that in which the commonwealth of England was introduced; without reflecting on the more enlightened state in which mankind are in modern times; drawing no comparison between those subjects of tyrannical sway, immediately under the eye of their Sovereign, and the inhabitants of America who lived remote from the sphere in which the terrors and splendor of royalty are displayed, and the power of despotism, ready to act against its opposers in an instant; not reflecting that the American contest was

exclusively a political one, unmingled with the eccentricities of a fanatic Army and Legislature, whose wild excess must naturally exhaust its own efforts ; these fearful, but well disposed reasoners, would have avoided a struggle originating in rebellion, in the apprehension, that the accomplishment of their object would be but temporary. This dread which was conjured up in weak minds, anterior to the declaration of our Independence, and which continued its influence to the triumphant close of the war, might in minds so organized, have been again revived, when at a very recent period, and long after our revolution had been achieved, the successful trial made by France to disenthral herself from the tyranny of Kings and Nobles and Prelates, eventuated in the recalling, after little more than twenty years, of the brother and relatives of the Monarch, whose decapitation, and the destruction of his dynasty, were hailed as the era, whence to date, the anticipated happiness of the French Republic. Even in the progress of our late struggle with Great Britain, the idea however extravagant seemed to be entertained, that a conquest of the United States was neither impossible, nor improbable. The allusion to such an event, became familiar to the bitter enemies of our republican systems. Their hopes and desires, met no obstacle, which might not be surmounted. The capture of the Capital, they ignorantly and maliciously identified with a reduction of the Country. In their wild rejoicings at an act, which barbarous and gothic, as it was, should have caused them to blush with shame at so outrageous a violation of the laws of nations, they imagined for a moment, that the conflagration of the dwelling house of our Chief Magistrate, and of the Halls of the National Legislature, was to strike such a panic, as to put down opposition, and effect a return to the arms of a " Legitimate Sovereign."— If the thought, or the suggestion, had been confined

to the enemy alone, it could be easily attributed to the deadliness of revenge, the jealousy which the enormously increasing power of this Country, was exciting in a rival, and the inveterate hostility to any Government, not founded as theirs is, on monarchical and aristocratic principles. But if it seriously occupied the attention of some, who appeared to promulgate it with a credulous pleasure, and operated on the fears of others, who were too blind to perceive its fallacy, we have only to regret, that treachery lurked in any bosom in this land, and that pusillanimity could ever be predicated of an American.—How completely Fellow-Citizens, have such reasonings, such fears, and such predictions been exposed as idle, by the unshaken stability of a Constitution, created by freemen, having Liberty for its guardian genius, Sovereignty, Independence, and the rights of man for its foundation, the union, strength, and safety of the nation, and the happiness of the people for its superstructure ! Those seem regardless of, if not insensible to, the blessings they possess, and indifferent to the advantages which fortune has extended to them, in casting their lot in this happy land, who after our glorious success, now institute or pursue the enquiry doubtingly, as to the duration of our republican system. Their opinions if any such, are actually formed, and their alarms if any such, are in reality excited, may be attributable in some measure, to the motives and causes already shown to have influenced the minds of those, who considered as questionable, the uninterrupted effects of our revolutionary change. But besides these views, such politicians too fond of precedents in history, fancy a principle of self destruction, or necessary end in our republic, because the Grecian democracies perished, and the grandeur and glory of Roman Liberty, ended in a military and hereditary empire. The systems of these nations had lasted for centuries. Under

their genial influence, men had been raised from obscurity, to the first honors of their Country. By their spirit, the arts and sciences, literature and philosophy, had been advanced. Their annals are pregnant with the biography of Heroes, Orators, Patriots, Statesmen and Generals, who are models for the imitation of every age and quarter of the world. In latter times also, a republic which had withstood the commotions and convulsions of successive ages, sunk under an overwhelming force, and surrendered their internal regulation, to an exotic power. Switzerland, which had disencumbered herself from the supremacy of Austria, had succumbed to the conquering genius of Gallic ambition. It is the misfortune of such political prophets as I have referred to, that they do not understand the application of the tenets or doctrines, which they extract from the chronicles of various ancient and modern communities. Our government is one of its own species. It may truly be asserted, that nothing like it in politics is known. The representative principle was reserved for the discovery of North America alone, and it did verily ennoble its authors, as the discovery of the new Continent, has immortalized the name and fame of Columbus. In none of the ancient republics, were the people justly represented. Their controul or check on the men in office, was merely nominal, if even so. Aristocracy, was a prominent feature of the Roman Republic. The Patricians were a distinct order, and the Plebeians were but subordinate to them, in right and privilege.—The Consul or Dictator, had powers perfectly inconsistent with what an American Magistrate would be allowed to hold, or acknowledged to be entitled to. In the institutions of Greece, the Governments savoured both of mobocracy and oligarchy, and it is rather matter for wonder at this stage of the experience of mankind, particularly of the American

people, how these almost anarchial Governments lasted so long, without systematic order, or constitutional limits to the prerogative of the rulers; without ascertaining the exact authorities of the Governors, and the necessary obedience to the laws, of the great mass of the populace. In every Government of this kind the mixture of orders will be found totally inconsistent with the principle of the popular sovereignty. When the will and actions of the people can be directed by lawgivers and functionaries, in whose appointment they have no voice; when there is a hereditary branch of the Legislature, or a Senate for life, or a Military Magistrate entrusted with absolute authority over the destinies of the Country; it is in vain to contend that such Governments are pure republics. There must be discontents and jealousies, where among some classes a haughty superiority is assumed and encouraged by the genius of such a Constitution, and a corresponding inferiority is felt by others. This state of things engenders animosities, which breaking out into civil commotions and internal wars, must in its consequence expose the Country to foreign invasion and conquest. The ambition of a mighty potentate is soon awakened, when he beholds a neighbouring people incensed among themselves. He sees that their contentions tend, but to weaken their own power. He watches the progress of their passions, and when the crisis arrives at which, in their mutual angry hostilities they seem to invite foreign interference, he seizes the occasion and annihilates their existence as an Independent Nation. Whether it is a confederacy, or a single State, the fatal result is the same. The heterogeneous frame of the one, the exhausted strength of the other, and the distractions of both, soon offer a ready prey to the ambition of a conqueror. No such seeds of corruption

Fellow-Citizens, exist in our Government. The Constitution of the Union, and of every member of it, is purely republican. The nature of each is the same. The temperament of our people is peculiarly congenial with liberty. As the General Government emanated from the people, it was not only entrusted with the power which was to guard them against perils from abroad, but invested with the preservation of liberty at home. "The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union, a Republican form of Government," is the grand principle on which our Government will last, "while the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves."—While indulging the enthusiasm excited in our bosoms by the return of this eventful day, how naturally my countrymen, we feel mingled with it, a grateful remembrance of the services and greatness of the man, to whom under the favor of heaven, the Congress of the revolution confided the direction of their armies.—In the character of this distinguished hero, there was a combination of virtues and qualities, which seemed almost to lift him, above human nature. Valor claimed him as her darling offspring. Liberty boasted of him as her brightest votary. The genius of war, enraptured with such a disciple, appointed him his Vicegerent on this side of the Globe. When fortune presided over our banners, he never in exultation lost the fruits of victory. In the darkest adversity, he never despaired of his Country. A succession of calamities, never made him tremble for her freedom. As he was the accomplished General and fortunate soldier in war, so he was the splendid and wise Statesman at the head of the Government, which the glorious work of the revolution, enabled his compatriots to establish. He had fought the battles, which created another nation on earth. That nation looked to him as the ornament of her councils. The illustrious commander who had thus wielded the

sword, was called with an ecstatic unanimity, to the Chief Magistracy of his Country. Let it be our pride, next to the love we have for God and our Country, to hold his principles sacred. Let every successive generation venerate his name. Let him be the object of their admiration, and the model for their imitation; and the United States will perpetuate their liberties in immortalizing the memory of Washington!—The character of our revolution, was of itself a sure earnest of its success. A hostile resistance to the authority of Great Britain was at first scarcely dreamt of. The American people presumed that a candid statement of the injuries which they suffered, from the mal-administration of the Government, whether arising from ignorance of their interests, or envy of their condition, would obtain them ample redress. They appealed to the throne. They called upon the justice of their Fellow-Citizens in England, to interest themselves in their behalf, warning them that in protecting the rights of the inhabitants of America, they were but guarding their own from encroachment. If the Constitution was violated in the persons of subjects on this side of the Atlantic, those who were at home had no better security for their liberties, their lives, and their fortunes. The will and caprice of a privy council or prime Minister, with corruption as their instrument, and the gratification of a sordid ambition as their aim, might enrich their satellites with the spoils of the Nation.

To temperate remonstrances, petitions and solicitations, repeated with patience, and addressed to every generous feeling of the heart, and every dictate of the understanding, the constituted authorities and the people of England were deaf. They scorned with contemptuous disdain, every application for the relief of American wrongs, which had not unconditional submission for its basis. When argument became

exhausted, physical strength was the last resort for men, who were willing to sacrifice every earthly consideration, rather than crouch to a master. As their minds were gradually prepared for opposition, their ultimate views extended, far beyond their original prospect. Just dissatisfaction, and a long suffering of evils, in the daily hope of their removal, had increased by degrees, to open enmity, and a firm resolve, to punish with their own hands, the insolence of their aggressors. The day of reconciliation was passed. If peace ever came, it was to be, not between a parent State and Colonies, but between distinct Sovereignties.

When applicants for justice were denounced as rebels, and armies transported to crush them, it was time to convince the unwise court and its merciless ministers, that men who avoided the last extremity, with such sincere solicitude, were the fittest to meet it, with stout hearts and unconquerable courage. The empire of which the United States had been a component part, was now dismembered for ever.

The blow which was struck at Lexington, could never be revenged, but by an eternal separation from the savage invaders of human rights, whose hands were reeking with the blood of the innocent, martyred in support of the first law of nature, the principle of self-preservation. And how thorough the retribution which our forefathers made, to the authors of their grievances ! how full was the satisfaction which their heroic exertions gained, from the instigators of murder, the instruments of cruel warfare, and the myrmidons of despotism. Through a war of seven years, their previously unskilled valor, astonished the civilized world. The vast force which advanced from Canada, soon changed their ostentatious vaunts, into tribulation and repentance.

Burgoyne found his orders obeyed too literally.—
 “ This army must not retreat,” was the injunction

which was strictly complied with at Saratoga. The gallant defence of Fort Moultrie, animating the ardor of the nation and the Congress which had just shaken off the yoke of the ruthless foe—the brilliant exploits of Trenton and Princeton, the battles of the Cowpens, the Eutaw Springs, King's Mountain and other numberless displays of discipline, chivalry and irresistible fortitude and finally the surrender of Cornwallis, whose boasted army was to subdue the spirit of the South, and extinguish the sparks of rebellion, opened the eyes of his Britannic Majesty to the prowess and patriotism of the American people. He lived to see them fulfil their solemn protestation, and redeem their pledge, to die or be free. He lived to acknowledge the rights and independence of a country, whose inhabitants he had outlawed as seditious, and branded as traitors. He lived, to behold America, her Washington, and her Congress, humble the pride of his Kingdom and his parliament, and to feel the feebleness and insignificance of royalty, when opposed to the genuine vigor of liberty.—After such an experience of the resources and principles of this Country, it might well have been hoped, that the pacific relations following the recognition of our Sovereignty, would have been studiously preserved by the English Government. They had roused a people, who in defence of their freedom were terrible to their enemies, and mighty in their strength. All the objects for which these people had fought and bled, had been attained. They had asserted the dignity of their race, upheld the pride of men, born to inalienable immunities. They had honorably taken vengeance for the imposition of their oppressors, by compelling them to renounce their pretensions, to govern this part of the Universe. They had settled their National Independence, and established personal liberty and equal rights on solid foundations.—They were reposing in the enjoyments of the bless-

ings their valor had won. They were happy in the glorious certainty, that they would transmit them unimpaired to a posterity, worthy of such an inheritance. Such a people it might easily have been foreseen, would be peculiarly tenacious of an acquisition, purchased with precious blood and immense treasure, It would be guarded and watched, with unsleeping vigilance, like the golden apples in the gardens of the Hesperides. Their sons imbibing the tenets of their fathers, would prize the palladium handed down to them as incapable of an equivalent. To its intrinsic value, would be added the sacred remembrance, of the ancestry who obtained it. They would be feelingly alive to the slightest effort, to pollute its excellence, or tarnish its beauty. They would resent, even a look which the eye of the spoiler, would insultingly give it. This expectation of peaceable policy on the part of Great Britain, was however, soon disappointed. Prudence which would have dictated that course, had abandoned her counsels, and jealousy and resentment, it was too evident, had survived the cessation of hostilities. As her scheme to enchain us as colonies was frustrated, a wish to insult and underrate us in consequence, as a nation, seemed her ruling passion. Her conduct presented the appearance of an armistice, rather than a peace. From the ratification of the treaty of '83, to our second appeal to arms, a succession of provocations, and a repetition of injuries, exhibited on her part, a most hostile envy of the rank which the Independence of our country, had enabled it to assume, among the nations of the earth. And my countrymen, what a lesson, has she been taught in the late conflict! If the war of the Revolution, lost her a prodigious and wealthy portion of her empire, that of 1812, has wrested from her a glory, which for ages she had haughtily proclaimed to be confined to herself. Her repeated defeats on the ocean, have startled her from the delusion—that,

of that element, she was Mistress.—Our wonderful victories on the Lakes, have shown her that not only ship to ship, but squadron to squadron, America; can vanquish in combat.—Here my friends the name of Perry comes both with delight and sorrow across our memory—His country is mourning for her bereavement, of so gallant a hero, so accomplished a champion of her honor, so valuable a protector of her rights. Her tears for his loss, are mingled with the conscious joy, and glorious pride she indulges,—while reviewing the catalogue of the illustrious ornaments, who are identified with her greatness, and reflect a brilliance on her character.—Such displays of consummate skill in naval warfare, have satisfied the world fully, if it had before been doubted, that America can protect her sovereignty and her commerce on the seas, as easy as she defends her freedom on the land. As the trident has been snatched from the hands of Britain, and the wooden walls of Old England, have been proved no impregnable rampart, let her look to her national existence.

A Conqueror established his dynasty in her Island—A formidable Armada may not always be dispersed by a storm.—When the spell of fancied invincibility is dissipated, there are powers, whose ambition of conquest supposed never to exist, may awake, as it were from its slumbers.—As the actions of our Navy overturned the faith of Britain in her unrivalled supremacy on the ocean, so the performances of the Army undeceived her as to the suspicion, that we had degenerated from our Ancestors, and were unfit to encounter the enemy whom they had humbled. With the spirit of Montgomery hovering over the Star-spangled-banner, the war was carried into Canada. York beheld the Eagle “sailing with supreme dominion,” and perched upon her ramparts. The roar of the Republican cannon, and the triumphant shouts of its victory, were mingled with the thunder-

ing sounds of Niagara's falls. Fort Erie and Chippewa, witnessed the "feathered King" of America, scattering the forces of their transatlantic Monarch, by "the terrors of his beak, and the lightnings of his eye."—Had the war been prolonged, another campaign might have found our Army, under the frowning battlements of Quebec.—To attempt again, what has once been achieved, could not be called, a romantic Expedition. That "a Victorious Army finds no difficulties,"—Wolfe proved to an admiring world. His ascension of the heights of Abraham, wrested Canada from the mighty monarch of France. In the destinies of fate, it might have happened, that the intrepid Pike, in an enterprize which would have called forth all the energies of his war-like genius, should "meet death" like him, not only in the arms of victory, but, in the very scene of his imperishable renown.—Not only in the advancement into the enemies' territories, did the American army exhibit the highest evidences of discipline and patriotic valor, but in resisting invasion, they made such lasting impressions on the fears of their antagonists, that it may safely be calculated, that no hostile footsteps will again tread our soil. The occupation of Louisiana, was the aim of the most formidable armament collected during the contest. But the gigantic efforts of Jackson, soon shattered into pieces this vaunted adamantine mass. Against this great and celebrated General, and his hardy soldiers, the tactics and experience of Europe were exercised in vain. His rapid operations and extraordinary judgment, soon discomfited the invading Brigades. In disgrace and flight they abandoned the project which was to confer by its inevitable success, glory on its promoters, and distinguished rewards on its executioners—Inhabitants of St. Andrews—The pleasure of commemorating our Country's Birth-Day, is heightened by the satisfaction I feel, in a festive intercourse with

citizens so patriotic as yourselves. I cannot refrain from expressing to you my grateful acknowledgements, for the honor you have conferred on me.—Your Parish ranks high in the esteem of Carolina. As long as this day is dedicated to the remembrance of our valorous forefathers, the spirit which animated them to oppose a tyrant, will prompt their sons to imitate their example. As long as with a holy enthusiasm, the American people throughout the country, annually offer up to Heaven thanks for the bliss and favors which are so plentifully showered on them, they will be the dread of despots, and the safe depository of the LIBERTIES OF MANKIND.—Fellow-Citizens, it is pleasant on this day to turn our attention to the noble efforts which are made in the cause of Liberty, in different parts of the world. In the possession of its sweets, we do not selfishly wish to appropriate them to ourselves. The participation of them, belongs to the human race. Nations who are groaning under bondage, have but themselves to blame, when they see before them a bright example of the efficiency of the people, to be their own rulers. Our brethren of South America are persevering in their opposition to the oppressive dominion of Spain. They have ignorance and bigotry to contend with—Their progress is interrupted by these difficulties, but their final triumph will be certain. When they accomplish the work of Independence, may they receive instruction from us, how to perpetuate its benefits!—There is another revolution, which peculiarly attracts the attention of mankind—it interests the philanthropist and excites the most enthusiastic emotions in the classical mind. Greece is resuscitated from the lethargic repose of ignominious slavery.—The shade of Leonidas has revisited his country. Inspired by the recollection of their ancient glory, Athens, Lacedemon, Corinth, may again be identified with the polish of science, the refinement of the

arts, and the influence of Liberty.—One Nation has unfortunately failed, in a valiant struggle against a most detestable attack on her sovereignty—Naples, to which Italy and the world were looking for a revival of the courage and patriotism of the old Republic of Rome, has yielded shamefully to the foul interference of an Emperor, who in this enlightened age declared, “that he does not like learned men.” Humiliating to human nature, as is the alternative, it is preferable to assign treachery and gold, as the causes of this unexpected and sudden delivery of their country into the hands of a foreign despot, rather than suspect or believe that the spirit which promised a desperate resistance was but a vapor. If it exists in reality, in the hearts of the people, it will burst forth, as soon as an opportunity offers of breaking their fetters on the heads of their oppressors.—With the hopes Fellow Citizens, we entertain for the success of some, and the fears we have for the fall of others, who are fighting to save all that is dear to them, how grateful ought Americans to be for the abundant felicity which prevails throughout their Republic! Our national wrongs have been amply revenged on those who inflicted them, by this righteous war of the Revolution, and the late cause in which the present generation embarked. If Great Britain is now desirous in sincerity, of a lasting friendship with the United States, there is every feeling and reason on our part, to reciprocate kindness and to interchange an amicable communication. Harmony between such Nations, is “a consumation devoutly to be wished.” It cannot but contribute to the prosperity of both. But if this power or any other, forgetful of the past, and regardless of Justice, should ever pretend to treat us with insult, if the memorials of American glory, should in the lapse of time be faintly remembered by the enemies of Liberty, and they be tempted to approach our shores in the attitude of hostility, then

may we be sure that the exalted dignity of our Country will be maintained spotless as ever,—that the majesty of the people will rise in its resistless impetuosity, that the fires of Freedom blazing on her sacred altars, will illuminate the world with their lustre, and consume the idolaters of tyranny, who dare venture with sacrilegious steps, within the sphere of their conflagration.





7

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 836 878 2

